

**In the Claims:**

Claims 1-21 (cancelled)

22. (Previously Presented) A stent comprising:

a plurality of annular elements, each annular element having a compressed state and an expanded state, wherein each annular element has a longitudinal dimension which is smaller in the radially expanded state than in the compressed state; and

connecting members connecting adjacent annular elements;

wherein the annular elements and connecting members are made of Nitinol, with each connecting member preset with an elasticity which causes the connecting member to elongate longitudinally when the annular elements are in their expanded state to compensate for the smaller longitudinal dimension of the annular elements in the expanded state.

23. (Previously Presented) The stent of claim 22, wherein each annular element comprises a plurality of alternating struts and apices connected to each other to form a substantially annular configuration.

24. (Previously Presented) The stent of claim 23, wherein the connecting members are connected to the apices of the adjacent annular members.

25. (Previously Presented) The stent of claim 23, wherein the plurality of struts comprises left and right struts, with each pair of left and right struts connected to each other at an apex.

26. (Previously Presented) The stent of claim 23, wherein each strut has a longitudinal dimensional which is smaller when the annular elements are in the expanded state than in the compressed state.

27. (Previously Presented) The stent of claim 23, wherein each strut has a longitudinal dimensional which is larger when the annular elements are in the compressed state than in the expanded state.

28. (Previously Presented) The stent of claim 23, wherein at least one of the annular elements is closed such that the plurality of alternating struts and apices are connected to each other to form a closed annular element.

29. (Previously Presented) The stent of claim 22, wherein at least one of connecting member has a plurality of alternating segments.

30. (Previously Presented) The stent of claim 29, wherein the at least one connecting member has a plurality of alternating and angled straight segments.

31. (Previously Presented) The stent of claim 22, wherein each connecting member has a larger longitudinal dimension when each annular element is in the expanded state than in the compressed state to compensate for the smaller longitudinal dimension of the annular element in the expanded state.

32. (Previously Presented) The stent of claim 22, wherein each connecting member has a smaller longitudinal dimension when each annular element is in the compressed state than in the expanded state to compensate for the larger longitudinal dimension of the annular element in the compressed state.

33. (Cancelled)

34. (Previously Presented) The stent of claim 22, wherein the annular elements and connecting members define an alternating longitudinal pattern of annular elements and connecting members.

35. (Cancelled)